

The Man Inside

by Paul de Denus

The “talking head” in the 21st Century gallery rambles on and on — *blah, blah, blah — blah, blah blah*. It's an egg-shaped glass bubble, a digital projection called Blue Husk. It resembles a melted I-Mac computer. The projection features a video of a woman's head tilted sideways. The sporadic rant is only intelligible if you allow yourself time to really listen and endure her facial twitches, gasps and whines, her moments of trapped silence. I'm reminded of my next door neighbors, the muffled sound of their sporadic conversation, a woman's voice rising and falling, the conversation one sided — *blah, blah, blah — blah, blah, blah*, punctuated with the occasional cry of exasperation. I imagine a husband sitting at a kitchen table, tuning her out, his capsulated mind begging alternative universes, far away from the one he is trapped in.

I float into the adjoining room of the 21st gallery, just out of earshot of the bubble-head and stare through the large glass gallery window which offers a view of lush trees and emerald grass. Joggers in colorful shorts and tops bounce along like rubber balls. An older couple sits on a bench, the man's arms swimming through the air as if demonstrating the breaststroke. The woman stares at the ground as he cups his hands above his head, indicating perhaps, the size of the world. Another woman, hobbled with a small white dog stops beneath a heavily shaded tree, dual relief for both of them. I wonder what goes on inside their heads, what the day ahead holds for them.

I watch it all trapped in the confines of the museum gallery, trapped inside my own head, my one-sided conversation - *blah, blah, blah — blah, blah, blah*. The Blue Husk rants on in the next room. I observe my reflection ghosted on the windowpane, my shimmering shape slowly swaying in my own glass bubble. I glance at my phone to check the time. How long until I can return to the alternative

universe that feels so far away from the one I'm currently stuck in.

